

PEACE AND EDUCATION

BY

DR. MARIA MONTESSORI

M.D. (Rome), D.Litt. (Durham)

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To ask anyone to speak on peace would appear to everybody a phenomenon quite foreign to our time, since we think today that nobody is worth listening to on any subject unless he is a specialist. For questions of far less importance, we choose only the most competent orators. Who would dream of asking a mathematician to criticize modern Art, or a man of letters to expound the theory of Radioactivity? And yet in comparison with the problem of Peace, of what value are even the most sublime branches of human knowledge? It is upon peace that the very life of the nation depends, perhaps even the progress or decay of our entire Civilization.

How strange it is therefore that there exists no science of peace, no science with an outward development comparable at least with the development of the science of war in the matter of armaments and strategy. Yet war, looked upon as a phenomenon due to collective humanity, presents greater proportions of mystery, for in spite of the fact that all the peoples of the earth are eager to escape from the most frightful of scourges, it is men themselves who set it afoot and they submit

War may be compared to the burning down of a palace filled with works of art and other treasures. If that palace has been reduced to a mass of smoking ashes, reeking with poisonous fumes, the disaster has reached its ultimate consequence: yet those cinders and the suffocating vapours they emit may be likened to peace as the word is generally understood.

Let us take another example; imagine a man dying as a result of an infectious illness. In his body, the war between the germs and those energies that might have made him immune to the disease is over and we very properly hope that he may rest in peace; but what a difference between that kind of peace and what is called health!

The error which consists in giving the name of peace to the permanent triumph of the ends which war had in view misleads us from the path of salvation that would lead us to the true peace. And as there is, in the history of all nations, a sort of periodic recurrence of unjust triumphs of that kind, so long as that error remains with us, the seeking after peace will be hopelessly beyond the reach of human possibilities. Hence the need of seeing clearly the essential differences, the opposite moral implications of war and peace; without that clear vision we shall be deceived, and while seeking for peace we shall find conflict. It is not only of the past I speak. To this day the life of the nations when they are not at war, is an adaptation to events that have gone before, an adaptation taking place between the victors and the vanquished. The former

lash out with whips and the latter hurl imprecations at them, like the demons and the damned in Dante's "Inferno"; all of them equally far removed from the Divine breath of love, all of them fallen beings who have broken away from the harmony of the universe. And this repeats itself endlessly, for all nations have been alternately victors and vanquished. Therefore the contact of nations, one with another throughout the ages has corrupted them all.

True peace, on the contrary, suggests the triumph of justice and love among men; it reveals the existence of a better world wherein harmony reigns.

In order to establish clearly the difference between war and peace, it is not sufficient to have a starting-point; to bring light into this field, as it has been brought into so many others, actual research work is needed. But where shall we find the laboratory in which the human mind is endeavouring to seek the truth, to find out the real acts related to peace? Nowhere! There is no such thing. There are only sentimental meetings, resolutions, appeals; no leading idea guides a study into the roots of this formidable problem. We seem to live in a state of ethical chaos, since—at the same moment—we honour the man who has discovered the microbe of a disease and invented the serum which will save numbers of human lives, and we honour still more greatly the man who discovers new means of destruction and uses his intellectual energies for the wiping out of the entire population of the world.

The value attached to life and the moral principles involved are so entirely contradictory in these two cases that one is tempted to believe in the mysterious co-existence of a double collective personality. It is evident that there is an unwritten chapter of human psychology, that there exists an untamed force of infinite danger to mankind.

In the research all the unknown elements of the problem must be taken into account. It must allow for hidden or unthought of elements which may be very remote from their ultimate effects. Just for these reasons the causes of war cannot be found in well-known and self-evident facts concerning social justice towards the individual workers in the field of economic production, or in the conditions resulting from the end of a war. These are already social results, they are perceptible to the most rudimentary logic; they constitute the stages immediately preceding the breaking out of the war.

This assertion may be illustrated by the history of a phenomenon parallel to that of war, a phenomenon which is, as it were, its reflection on the physical plane. I am speaking of the plague, that scourge capable of decimating or even wiping out a whole population and which remained for thousands of years invincible and much to be dreaded—the plague propagated by ignorance—and which was only conquered when scientifically studied even in its most hidden causes. The plague, as we know, appeared at long intervals just like wars; it disappeared spontaneously, and society, which did not know its causes, could not interfere

actively to hasten its disappearance. It broke out as an appalling chastisement and caused ravages which have become historical, like wars. Indeed the plague took a greater number of victims than war, and caused many more economic disasters. In the XIVth century there was a plague that in China alone took a toll of ten millions. That same devastating wave swept over Russia, Asia Minor, Egypt and reached Europe, threatening with destruction the whole of mankind. Hecker, quoted by Wells, puts the number of victims at more than 25 millions, hence the ravages of the plague were worse than those of any war, even the Great War. Each appearance of this scourge was accompanied by a general stoppage of productive labour, thus ushering in periods of deep misery, so that famine followed after the plague accompanied by the phenomenon of the "hallucinated," a notable proportion of the survivors being mentally unbalanced. This fact increased the difficulties of a return to normal conditions and put an end to the constructive work of civilization for a long time. It is interesting to examine the explanations which were given of this scourge, an amazingly striking image of war on the physical plane, and to find out what attempts were made to protect men against it. From Homer and Titus Livius to the labour chronicle of the Middle Ages, we always find the same explanation: the plague is caused by wicked men who disseminate poisons. Dion Cassius, describing the plague of that year A.D. relates that, in the whole of the empire, cruel men had

been enrolled who, for money, threw poisoned needles about everywhere. At another period, in the days of Pope Clement VI, the Jews were accused of spreading this disease and were massacred. When during the siege of Naples, the plague destroyed 400,000 of the inhabitants of the city—that being nearly the whole of the population and almost three quarters of the besieging troops—the Neopolitans believed themselves to be poisoned by the French and the latter by the Neopolitans.

Still more interesting are the documents to be found in the ancient Ambrosian Library of Milan, dealing with the setting up of courts of Justice and with the proceedings of a lawsuit brought against two poisoners accused of having started the famous plague of Milan, proceedings which ended in their being condemned to death to make an example of them. This was the only instance of legal proceedings having been undertaken in order that, under such very exceptional circumstances, public chastisement should not be left to popular vengeance. The proceedings of the lawsuit preserved in the state archives were variously commented upon by a number of writers. It is a significant fact that a question so patently pathological could have been discussed as though due to an act of falling under the sanction of the law and should have given rise to a lawsuit brought against men utterly powerless to cause such a stupendous disaster. This seems absurd nowadays when we think of the plague, but do we not, in the case of war, seek to

foist the responsibility for the world cataclysm upon an individual—the Kaiser, the Czarina, or the regicide of Serajevo?

Another kind of phenomenon, caused by the instinct of self-preservation, was observed during the most devastating outbreaks of the plague; this was the flocking together of those who remained immune. Crowds assembled in public squares, filled the churches and organized processions in the streets, chanting prayers, carrying banners, sacred images and relics. These pictures helped to spread the disease rapidly among those who might have escaped. Finally the scourge ceased abruptly and the survivors reconciled to life, their heart swelled with the hope which never dies, they were convinced that mankind had just undergone a necessary trial, perhaps the last one.

Does not this state of mind remind us of the alliances made between nations in order to avoid war? The aim of pre-war alliances was to establish a European balance against war: it is plain to us now that it was precisely this system which caused the stupendous disaster, because a great number of nations were drawn into the conflict from the mere fact of being bound to others. And if, today, all the nations in the world had united with the aim of doing away with war, but left untouched within themselves the same tendencies and the same disregard of first causes, the war would not only have spread to the whole world, but men would have continued to hope, imagining that this was the last war necessary to the final establishment of peace.

It was scientific research in the realm of the invisible which alone succeeded in discovering the direct cause of the plague: specific micro-organisms and their propagating agents, which were rats. As these small mammals shun mankind, they had never been suspected. Once the factors causing the plague were known, it became apparent that it was one of the numberless diseases which continually threaten the health of mankind and find in a vitiated environment a permanent ground of infection.

Now in the Middle Ages the people lived indifferent and ignorant lives amidst unsanitary conditions, coming and going through the filth accumulated in the public streets, without water in their houses, choosing dark stuffy rooms to sleep in, fearing the sunshine. This created a favourable ground for the breeding not only of the dreaded plague but of an infinite number of sicknesses less apparent in their manifestations, because they only attacked individuals or families and did not interfere with the daily life of mankind. Hence when men fought successfully against the plague, they also of necessity carried out, against all diseases caused by germs, an energetic campaign of public and private cleansings, undertaken at the same time in cities and inside every private house. And that was the first chapter of the glorious history of the defence of mankind against one of the smallest of living creatures which still threatened its existence.

But personal hygiene, the ultimate attainment of that long fight, has yet another aspect. Health, as

such, took on a new value because a perfectly healthy man, well grown and strong, can run the risk of infection without being contaminated. Personal health is related to self-control and to the worship of life in all its natural beauty—self-control bringing with it happiness, renewed youth, and long life. The personal health has acquired enormous importance and it has placed before itself, as the goal to be reached, the ideal of the perfectly healthy man.

Now when mankind started on this new quest, the perfectly healthy individual simply was not to be found. Whether he was underfed or overfed, a man was always filled with poisons; we may go so far as to say that he deliberately poisoned himself. Little by little and with great zest, he brought upon himself suffering and death; he found his greatest pleasure in a superabundance of food, in the poisons of alcohol, in idleness. What science revealed was that what he looked upon as delight, indeed as peculiarly enviable privilege, held within it the germs of death. Voluntary renunciation of interminable, solemn, sumptuous meals, of the refined and tempting pleasures of the cellar, or of thoughtless indolence, was looked upon not as a means of escape from ill-health, but as a sacrifice, a penance and the highest possible virtue. It seemed like renouncing immediate enjoyment, and at the same time sacrificing life itself. Yet these pleasures were built upon the foundations of unsuspected degradation. They were the pleasures of men who had sunk into idleness and lost all taste for strenuous living. When

the legions of micro-organisms attacked a man, he was already infected, enfeebled and almost in a dying condition. But when the love of life at last revived and became dominant, man was terrified by the consequences of his degeneracy and he fled to sunshine and activity joyously as to liberation. The simple life, temperate meals, preference given to the vegetarian diet, and even to raw food, joy in a physical effort, the total giving up of one's self to natural life-giving forces, that is today the way of living of those who know how to enjoy modern existence, of those who wish to live long and conquer ill-health. A saint of the olden times would have looked upon such existence as the model of perfect penance.

The idea of personal hygiene has thus completely reversed the values formerly professed: it has suppressed the pleasures accompanying the race for death and replaced them by the pleasures of the race for life.

But in the realm of ethics we have not taken one forward step; in respect to morality we are as backward as men of the Middle Ages were in respect to sanitation. Our conscience does not even suspect that dangerous unknown quantities exist in the realm of ethics; it only conceives of superficial reactions; the loose morality of the present day is explained as a form of modern liberty, a shaking of the old ethical shackles which had remained untouched since the days when salvation was thought to be found in sacrifice. To work less, allowing machinery to make all the necessary effort, such is the highest aim inspiring the

conquest of our modern times. And in the substratum of our chaotic ethical life is found the overwhelming desire to get rich which reveals the existence of that irresistible vice called avarice, and which is the parallel on the ethical plane of idleness on the physical plane. Both imply the illusion that one is heaping up treasure and both give the illusion of enjoyment. But pleasures which have their roots in those two vices of a decadent epoch are in reality poisonous and mortally dangerous. The wide world open to a sane and conquering life remains hidden; man, with his secret vices holds himself aloof from it, he preys upon himself in the dark cavern of his subconsciousness. If it were possible, in this matter, to use a pathological parallel, this moral situation might be likened to the subtle creeping sickness whose unsuspected menace hangs over our life: tuberculosis. In its early stages tuberculosis causes a frenzied desire for enjoyment and it remains a long time latent and imperceptible. While the plague is a rapid and sudden scourge, tuberculosis is a slow consuming of the enfeebled body.

Everything considered, we live morally in a state of degeneracy in a dark and stuffy environment, and crowds of us are making false assertions. How many moralists, for example, go about today repeating that the error of the age consists in a determination to base everything upon the human reason; how many are convinced that progress cannot be reached by mere logic, taking everything in hand. But seemingly there is no one who doubts that reason is reigning triumphant

today, that it is the supreme sovereign. And yet it is precisely man's reason which is now obscured and almost vanquished. In reality the prevailing chaos of our ethics is merely one aspect of our psychical degeneracy, the other aspect being the loss of reason. It is this loss of reason, this spreading and increasing madness, that characterizes our time. The return to reason is the most urgent thing for us.

If we wish to set about a sane psychical rebuilding of mankind, we must go back to the child. But in the child we must not merely see the son, the being in whom our responsibilities are centred: we must consider the child in himself and not in his relation to us, which is that of dependence. We must turn to the child as to a MESSIAH, an inspired being, a regenerator of our race and of society. We must succeed in effacing ourselves till we are filled with this idea, then go to the child, as the wise men of the East, loaded with power and with gifts and led by the star of hope.

In the child, as Jean Jacques Rousseau theoretically imagined him, we can find the natural characteristics of man before they were changed and spoilt by the baneful influences of society and around this theoretical problem the fantasy of genius wove a romance. Such a question would interest abstract psychology, and the study of it would go far to create an embryology of the mind.

But, for our part, as we studied the new child, who has manifested unsuspected psychical characteristics—surprising because hitherto unknown—we discovered

something more than an embryology of the mind. What struck us in particular was the existence of an actual conflict, of a ceaseless struggle which awaits man at his birth and accompanies him throughout the course of his growth—and this is the conflict between the adult and the child, between the strong and the weak, we may even add, between the blind and the seeing. The adult in his dealings with the child is indeed blind and the child is indeed a seer: he brings us the gift of a little flame to enlighten us. The adult and the child—both unconscious of their own characteristics—are engaged in age-long warfare, more acute than ever today because of our complex and depressing civilization. The adult triumphs over the child so that, when the child has grown into a man, he bears graven forever in him, the marks of that famous peace which follows war, and which is on one hand a destruction and on the other a painful adaptation. It is impossible for the child to help the old fallen man to rise by instilling into him his own fresh, new life, for the old man just goes for him and tries to crush him. This situation was not so disastrous in the past as it is gradually becoming now that man, creating an environment ever further removed from the state of nature, hence less and less adapted to the child, is increasing his power and at the same time his domination over the child. Now new moral refinement has come to save the adult from his blinding selfishness; no new understanding of this changing situation so unfavourable to the child has illumined his intelligence. The ancient

superficial idea of the uniform and progressive growth of the human personality has remained unaltered and the erroneous belief has persisted that it is the duty of the adult to fashion the child according to the pattern required by society. This misunderstanding, handed down from time immemorial, caused the first war between men, who were most emphatically intended to love one another; a war between parents and children, between teachers and pupils.

The key to this problem is to be found in the fact that the human personality is not single. On the contrary there are two shapes and two separate goals, those pertaining to the child and those pertaining to the man. We do not find in the child the same characteristics as in the adult, only on a small scale: the child possesses his own characteristic life which has its end in itself. This end may be expressed by the word "Incarnation" which means that in the child must be realized the incarnation of the personality. Therefore the character and rhythm of the child's life will be totally different from those of the adult, who is chiefly engaged in modifying his environment and who is pre-eminently a social being. If we think of the unborn child, this idea at once becomes clearer: the life of the embryo in the mother's womb has one sole end, and that is maturing into the new-born child. Thus is fulfilled the first period of man's life, and vital force will be greater in the modern child whose pre-natal growth has been fostered by the best possible conditions that a healthy mother can give it, although she has nothing

to do except to let the new life develop within hers. But the gestation of man is not confined to the short ante-natal period. There is yet another form of gestation; that accomplishment by the child in the exterior world: the act of incarnating the spirit whose germs are in him, though in a latent and unconscious form. Delicate nurture is needed to protect this process which gradually becomes conscious and which is perfected through knowledge acquired in the outer world—the process accurately carried out by the child who is guided by laws as are all beings in nature, and who obeys a rhythm of activity which has no common measure with that of the conquering and combative adult.

That the period of incarnation and of spiritual gestation is entirely different from the period of adult socialized activity, is not really a new idea. On the contrary, it is one that accompanies us through life with some solemnity and that has been proclaimed to us for centuries as a great truth; it is even embodied in sacred rites. We all keep two festivals in the year, Christmas and Easter. We recognize them in our hearts, we keep them by a suspension of social activity. Many of us observe them religiously. What do those two ancient festivals bring to our remembrance? They remind us of one single distinct thing. In the history of Jesus the period of incarnation lasted till puberty, that is to say, until the time when, at the age of about 13, He said to His parents: "Why do ye seek me? Do ye not know that I have other concerns than yours?" And during that

period His behaviour was that of a Child who did not acquire His knowledge from wise adults, but who, on the contrary, amazed and confounded them. It was only later that began the hidden life of the Son obeying His parents, learning His father's trade, and adapting Himself to that society of men in which He was to carry out His mission.

When the independent life of the child is not recognized with its own characteristics and its own ends, when the adult man interprets these characteristics and ends, which are different from his, as being errors in the child which he must make speed to correct, there arises between the strong and the weak a struggle which is fatal to mankind. For it is verily upon the perfect and tranquil spiritual life of the child that depends the health or sickness of the soul, the strength or weakness of the character, the clearness or obscurity of the intellect. And if, during the delicate and precious period of childhood, a sacrilegious form of servitude has been inflicted upon the children, it will no longer be possible for men successfully to accomplish great deeds, and we have there the symbolical sense of the Bible story of the Tower of Babel.

Now, the struggle between the adult and the child finds its expression—both within the family circle and at school—in what is still called by the old name of “Education.” But when the intrinsic value of the child's personality has been recognized and he has been given room to expand, as in the case of our school (when the child creates for himself an environment

suited to his spiritual growth) we have had the revelation of an entirely new child, whose astonishing characteristics are the opposite of those that had hitherto been observed.

We may therefore assert that it would be possible, by the renewing of education, to produce a better type of man, a man endowed with superior characteristics as if belonging to a new race: the superman, of whom Nietzsche caught a glimpse. Herein lies the part that education has to play in the struggle between war and peace, and not in its cultural content. Above all it is to be noted that the child has a passionate love for order and work, possesses intellectual qualities superior by far to what might have been expected. It is very evident that, subjected to the usual education, the child has had not only to withdraw within himself, but to dissimulate his powers, in order to adapt himself to the judgment of the adult who lorded it over him. And so the child performed the cruel task first of hiding his real self, then of forgetting it, of burying in his subconsciousness a wealth of expanding life whose aspirations were frustrated. Then, bearing this hidden burden, he encountered the errors current in the world.

Thus does the problem of education present itself when we envisage it from the point of view of war and peace, not as a matter of what ought or what ought not to be taught. Whether we speak or do not speak of war to the children, whether we adapt history for their use in this way, does not change the destiny of

mankind. But an education that is merely a blind struggle between the strong and the weak can only produce an inefficient man, weakened and enslaved, a man whose growth has been stunted.

That the child in his own individual nature possesses characteristics different from what has been commonly believed, has been plainly shown by the uninterrupted experience of a quarter of a century, carried out not only among the majority of the civilized nations, but in the most diverse races: among the red men of America, the natives of Africa, the Siamese, the Javanese, the Laplanders. When the experience began, much was said, under the influence of the current educational progress, about a new method of education capable of giving amazing results. But ere long the full reality and importance of the phenomenon was recognized, and there appeared in England a book, *New Children*. The striking revelation was the existence of a different kind of humanity, the comforting emergence of a better quality of human being. Was it then not impossible to improve human nature? That is indeed a possible achievement, given the right environment: for the deviations hitherto enforced during the period of growth must be substituted normal conditions, if we wish the soul to reach its fully healthy development.

A healthy man from the psychical point of view is rare nowadays, is indeed almost unheard of, just as a physically healthy man was a rare phenomenon before the coming of personal hygiene, which showed mankind

how to find the lost road to good health. In the realm of ethics, man still delights in subtle poison and his ambition reaches out for advantages that are full of mortal dangers to the spirit. Often he disguises his vices, hereditary or transmitted by education, and allows them to masquerade as virtue, duty or honour. The unsatisfied needs of the child leave their mark on the adult in whom they come out as inhibitions, preventing his intellectual development, as deviations of moral character, as innumerable psychical anomalies which make the personality weak and uncertain. The child who has never learned to act alone, to direct his own actions, to govern his own will, grows into an adult who is easily led and must always lean upon others.

The school-child, being continually discouraged and scolded, ends by acquiring that mixture of distrust of his own powers and of fear which is called shyness, and which later, in the grown man, takes the form of discouragement and submissiveness, of incapacity to put up the slightest moral resistance. The obedience which is expected of the child both in the home and in the school—and obedience admitting neither of reason nor of justice—prepares man to be docile to blind forces. The punishment, so frequent in schools, which consists in subjecting the culprit to public reprimand and is almost tantamount to the torture of the pillory, fills the soul with a crazy, unreasoning fear of public opinion, even of an opinion, manifestly unjust and false. In the midst of these adaptations, and many

others which set up a permanent inferiority complex, is born the spirit of devotion—not to say of idolatry—to the “condottiere,” the leaders, who for this repressed personality, are the fathers and the teachers; that is to say, the figures who impose themselves on the child as perfect and infallible. Thus discipline becomes almost a synonym of slavery.

The child has never been able to try and follow the moral paths which his latent vital urge would have sought out eagerly in a world new to him; he has never been able to put his own creative energy to the test. But he has succeeded in setting up within himself an order that resulted in a sure and unchanging discipline.

When he has attempted to find out the path of justice, he has wandered and become perplexed and has finally been punished for having tried to accomplish deeds of love by helping school-fellows still more oppressed and obscure than himself. On the contrary, he has received tokens of approbation when he turned spy and tell-tale. The virtue worthy above all others of public encouragement and of reward has always been the triumphing over one's school-fellows in competitions, and the gaining in examinations of the decisive victory allowing one to pass from one year to another of a monotonous existence of perpetual servitude. Men brought up in this way have been prepared neither to fight and be victorious, nor to conquer truth and possess it, nor to love others and join with them in striving for a better life. Their education has prepared them rather for an incident, a mere episode of real

community life: war. For, in reality, the cause of war does not lie in armaments, but in the men who make use of them.

If man had grown up with a healthy soul enjoying the full development of a strong character and of a clear intellect, he could not have borne that there should exist within himself, at one and the same time, contradictory moral principles; nor could he have endured to be simultaneously the upholder of two kinds of justice, the one protecting life and the other destroying it, nor would he have consented to cultivate in his heart both love and hatred. Neither could he have tolerated two disciplines, the one gathering together human energies for constructive purposes and the other gathering those same energies for the destruction of what has been constructed. In other words, a strong man could not bear to have a double conscience, still less could he bear to act in two opposite directions. Now human personality is so different, it must be simply because men are passive and allow themselves to be blown hither and thither like dead leaves.

The wars of today are not born of hatred for the enemy. Who would dare to assert such a thing when we see nations fighting against any people and now against another, and those who are foes today becoming friends tomorrow? Verily the white man, the man of the proud civilization, is reduced to the mentality of the ancient army of mercenaries who fought indifferently against any foes provided they were paid to do so. Things are no different today; men will waste their

efforts, and their wealth, they will lay themselves open to the destruction of their own achievements and run the risk of famine, simply because they have been ordered to do so. The Egyptians of old knew how to maintain a distinction between the deeds of civilization and the deeds of war; they enrolled Phoenician troops to fight and they kept the Egyptian people for the tilling of the soil and the work of civilization. But we of the proud civilization confuse the two. A better man than we, faced by the complexity of our social problems and diagnosing perplexities we are up against every day, would use his intellect and the conquests of civilization accumulated by his forefathers to find a means of ending the fury of war. What is the use today of having an intellect, and to what purpose do we possess so much knowledge, acquired by the wisdom of our forefathers? War would not be a problem at all for the soul of the new man: he would see it simply as a barbarous state, contrasting with civilization, an absurd and incomprehensible phenomenon.

War today is really a scourge which can have no other meaning than that of being an eternal chastisement attached to the moral errors which darken the human mind. To conquer war, a sincere and inspired voice would be enough, crying like Jonah: "Be ye converted and repent, or Neneveh shall be destroyed."

It seems so self-evident as to be almost a childish statement to assert that only two things are needed in order to establish peace in the world: above all, a new type of man, a better humanity; then an environment

that should no longer set a limit to the infinite desire of man.

It would be necessary that wealth should be localized in no country but equally accessible to all. How can we guarantee the nations will permit others to pass over the roads they have made, when they know that this would enable those others to use the treasure contained in their soil? If the whole of mankind is to be united into one brotherhood, all obstacles must be removed so that men, all over the surface of the globe, should be as children playing in a garden. Man's little piping voice must be able to make itself heard all over the world, with its intonations, whether he be singing for joy, or calling, or warning, or asking for help and expecting a comforting voice to answer him. Verily I believe that laws and treaties are not enough: what we need is a world full of miracles, as it seemed miraculous to see the young child seeking work and independence, and manifesting a wealth of enthusiasm and love. A new world for a new man: that is what we sorely need today.

If this were Utopian it would be sacrilegious even to mention it, when we stand on the edge of an abyss at the bottom of which we perceive catastrophe lying in wait for mankind. But is it not Utopian that already some time ago at the beginning of this century a spark of the miraculous life made its appearance in our world? Is it not a fact that man flies? Behold, earthly obstacles no longer separate one land from another and man can go all around the world without building roads and

without trespassing upon the land of others. And if man succeeds in conquering gravitation, and if—so as to make rapid journeys which are a source of wealth—he manages to reach the stratosphere, who shall become its possessor? Who shall own the rights over gravitation or over the ether in the space beyond the limits of the atmosphere? These long and short waves—the medium of mysterious communications, invisible but nevertheless efficiently carrying the voice of man and the thoughts of all mankind, in an absolutely immaterial way, without pen or ink, without newspapers—where are they? To whom do they belong? Who will ever be able to exhaust them? Solar energy will ultimately be transformed into a more substantial kind of bread than ours and into heat for the dwelling of man; what nation will declare itself the owner of solar energy? There are no limits, there is no localization for the new wealth which man acquires when he seeks it in the realm of the ether of the infinite heavens of the starry soul of the universe.

What, in such times, would be the sense of conflicts among men? They used to fight for the appearances of so-called matter—but now they have discovered their origins, they have found out that these were forces, they have made themselves masters of the occult and infinite causes as well as their limited effects. Like God, man has seized them and has thus wrought a revolution in social life. A wonderful and unforeseen move forward has placed the realm of human conquest on a higher level than the earth. The surface of

the earth used to have two dimensions for mankind, today it is beginning to have three and the history of a mankind living in a two-dimensional world is closed.

An age of thousands of years is drawing to its close—a period going back to the beginnings of History and beyond that to the days of which legend tells, and still further back—to the periods only rare vestiges of which are left buried in the depths of the soil. The epoch which began with the origin of man, an immense chapter which has slowly unfolded through an immeasurable span of time, is ended. Until now man has had to toil with the sweat of his brow, as though under a sentence of hard labour, he has had to humble himself as a slave. Although in himself of a lofty nature he has remained ever attached to the ground. He, the creature of love, has been constrained to allow himself to be fettered by the shackles of the exchange of material goods. But now that man has entered into the realm of the stars, he can rise to his full height; he can present himself to the universe as a new being. He it is who is the child, the new child. He it is who is the new man, entering into the third dimension, the man predestined to undertake the conquest of the infinite. Such a conquest is a work of great magnitude and it demands the help of all men. But to bind them together they will find no other cement than love.

Such is the vision that we see in the real facts of today. We who are the last men to live in a two-dimensional world must make a strenuous effort to rise to the

understanding of the vision. We have fallen upon a period of crisis, inserted between an old world which is drawing to its end and a new world which has already begun and has revealed all three elements that go to build it up. The crisis we are witnessing is not one of those that make the passage from one era to another, it can only be compared with the opening of a new Biological or Geological period, when new beings come upon the scene, more evolved and more perfect, while upon the earth are realized conditions of life, which had never existed before. If we lose sight of this situation, we shall find ourselves enmeshed in a universal catastrophe which will call to mind prophecies of the year one thousand—that year of which it was said that the world would not survive it. If the sidereal forces are used blindly by men who know nothing about them—the men of the two-dimensional world—in view of destroying one another, the attempt will speedily be successful in doing so, because the forces at man's disposal are infinite and accessible to all, at all times and in every place. If man—who possesses the secret of pestilential sicknesses, holding in his hands their invisible agents which he can cultivate and multiply *ad infinitum*—uses that which was a sublime conquest over disease in order to spread the scourge of epidemics and poison the world, he will easily succeed in his endeavour. Henceforth there is no obstacle preventing him from reaching all regions, to the uttermost ends of the earth: neither mountains nor deserts nor seas will stop him now that he can fly over them.

What are we going to do? Will no one sound the trumpet to awaken man who is lying asleep on the ground while the earth is making ready to engulf him?

We must prepare men for the new world which is spontaneously building itself around us as a phenomenon of evolution; we must make them conscious of the new life which is coming about, in order that they work for it.

At the same time we must gather together all the elements of this new world and organize them into a science of peace.

Will not the League of Nations and the societies for promoting peace make themselves the centre of a new orientation of mankind?



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